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515 356 but in neither case did practice measure up to ideal, to judge from the abundance of body vermin and from descriptions of toldos. Body lice were commonly eaten.

POLITICAL LIFE

114 Our best source on political life is Viedma. Musters, D'Orbigny, and Borgatello rank next in order as sources.

There were no sibs, no secret or other societies, and no ruling caste or marked social stratification.

621 **The band.**—The basic *Tehuelche* economico-political unit was the band, each with its own headman. There was no peace-time paramount chief of all the *Tehuelche*, or of either of the two great divisions, northern and southern. According to Fitz-Roy (1839, 2: 131), the *Tehuelche* of his time were divided into four groups or bands of about 400 adults each, each band under its own headman. D'Orbigny, however, who made his observations in 1829 just 4 years prior to Fitz-Roy's visit, states that the *Tehuelche* were divided into a great number of bands (1839, 2: 97–98)—a statement that is in closer agreement with most of our earlier and more recent sources.

To judge from our scattered data, these bands were usually, though not always, small. In 1749 there came to Pilar mission three *Tehuelche* caciques with 80 toldos, each toldo sheltering 3 or 4 families, and the families averaging 5 persons each (Sánchez Labrador, 1936, p. 119)—thus, about 400-530 souls on the average per cacique. One band met by the Malaspina expedition in 1789 had 60 members in all (Lehmann-Nitsche, 1914, p. 8). Other estimates are: At most 30 to 40 families per band (D'Orbigny, 1835–47, 2: 97); 5 to 30 families (Spegazzini, 1884, p. 229); never more than 20 toldos found in one camp (Borgatello, 1924, p. 20); and one large band, Mulato's, with over 500 persons (ibid., p. 134).

621 423 721 Some insight into the composition and functions of the band may be derived from Fitz-Roy, D'Orbigny, and later writers. Each of Fitz-Roy's four bands had its own cacique or headman, and each claimed "a separate though ill-defined territory" as its exclusive hunting ground; at times all four bands would foregather in one place; encroachment by members of one band on the hunting ground of another led to battles (Fitz-Roy, 1839, 2: 131). Each toldería had its own territory, two or three of them on the banks of the Río Negro (D'Orbigny, 1835–47, 2: 98). Bands were made up of related or friendly families (Spegazzini, 1884, pp. 228–229). Each small band was composed of relatives and friends; each claimed exclusive hunting rights on its own territory, trespass being cause for war, and the most frequent cause (Borgatello, 1924, pp. 19–20).

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Much clearer insight into the composition and functions of the band comes from Viedma. Each cacique or headman had "a determined territory under his jurisdiction, no Indian of his group can enter the territory of another headman without seeking the permission of the latter." Trespass without such permission was one of the chief causes of war. An Indian of one band wishing to pass through or tarry in the territory of another band, had to make three smoke signals and await the answering signals before entering such territory. If consent was not given by the cacique, he was commanded to depart forthwith. Trespass without such formality was interpreted as evidence of bad faith, and resort was had to arms (Viedma, 1837 b, p. 73).

Some idea of the size of band territories is given by Viedma. On the Atlantic coast between Puerto de Santa Elena in 40° S. latitude and Cabo Virgenes at the eastern end of the Strait of Magellan near 52° S. latitude, in all a distance as the crow flies of about 850 miles, there were in 1780–83, according to Viedma (1837 b, pp. 65–68), six bands with their respective headmen. The territory of the northernmost of these extended from Puerto de Santa Elena to Puerto de San Gregorio in 45°4′ S. latitude, about 350 miles north to south; the other five averaged about 100 miles of coast each. How far these territories extended inland Viedma does not explicitly state, but presumably well back toward, or perhaps even to, the foothills of the Andes.

The following passage, highly significant for the unique insight it gives into band composition and family land tenure, needs to be quoted in its entirety.

> The cacique is under obligation to protect and aid the Indians of his jurisdiction and territory in their necessities. In this respect he is the more esteemed, has a greater following among them, and is preferred as a cacique, who is more ready to aid them, more liberal, and more intelligent in the chase. For if he lacks these qualifications, they go off and seek another cacique who does possess them, leaving him [their previous headman] alone with his relatives, and exposed to continual invasions from neighbors: *although that family does not thereby lose its right to the* [its] *territory* [italics ours], and in the course of time there will ordinarily be some other person who will reestablish the tolderia which his father, grandfather, or brother has lost through misfortune or misconduct. When the cacique grows old and for lack of vigor cannot fulfill the obligations of his office, he relinquishes the command to his successor. [Viedma, 1837 b, p. 74.]

A tolderia may be composed of four, five, or more families, each family consisting of a man, his wife and children, and his relatives; this man, who is head or chief of the family, is a sort of subaltern cacique, a subaltern of the cacique who has general charge of everyone and who has right of ownership of the territory (Viedma, 1837 b, p. 76).

484 as before, but if he says nothing, then all know that for the while they are to remain in that place. Their camp site is usually in the area to which they know that the game has moved. When the chief sees that meat is running low he gives orders at sundown, in the same manner as when ordering a move to a new camp site, that the horses are to be brought in at some specified time on the following day. Once this has been done he harangues them once more, this time on horseback, and assigns the hunting stations and all else which each group of hunters is to [462] do. Some women go with them to load the game, the men being unwilling to do even this chore. The tents are left standing and in them [90] the remaining women, children, and disabled Indians wait. At sundown 622 they return to their tents once more. The chief's authority is limited to these few activities only, and he never for any crime punishes his people, although in the aforementioned matters in which obedience is required it is never found that they do not fulfill his orders faithfully. When 721 623 he wants to wage war on his neighbors, or on some other group which may have insulted their honor, this can only be carried into effect with the approval of his chief subordinates, to which effect they meet together in the chief's tent. The latter mulls over and explains the wrongs which have been done, the way in which they can be avenged, forces, ease and difficulties entailed in the waging of the war. The members of the council confer about the matter and either approve or reject the proposal of the chief, who does not take offense if he is overruled. Usually the chief's bid for war is approved and the council merely discusses ways and means of waging it, and the time of its commencing. This discussion 721 203 often lasts some days. Once they are agreed on the matter of beginning hostilities the chief, on three successive nights, shouts the news in a loud voice from his tent so as to inform his people of the declaration of war, the time which has been set for its [72] commencement, the manner in which it is to be conducted, who are the enemies, the cause of the war, and they are warned to be wary and prepared.

721 One of the principle causes for the declaration of war is the fol- 423 lowing: Each chief's territory has fixed boundaries, and no Indian may cross into the territory of a neighbor without obtaining permission from 484 the latter to do so. The Indian who wishes to obtain such permission [202] must make three smoke signals, and until he is answered by three other smoke signals he may not approach the encampment. Once he has been answered he must give an account of himself to the chief in whose territory he is, telling his reasons for coming, be it only because he is passing through or because he wishes to take up residence there. If the chief so

invasion by his neighbors. As a matter of fact the unfortunate chief's family does not lose its right to its land, and with the passage of time it often happens that some descendant will re-establish the colony which his father, grandfather or brother destroyed either by bad luck or bad conduct. When a chief becomes old and unable to fulfill the obligations of his position he hands over his authority to a successor.

Marriages are made by a man's buying his wife from her father or from some other under whose guardianship she may be, and in proportion to her rank, good looks, conduct, etc. she is either more or less expensive. Her will is not taken into account for this transaction by her father or guardian, and she cannot set herself against her own sale. Each man may have one, two, or more wives of his own, depending on his wealth, but only rarely does a man have more than one unless he be a chief or an Indian of great power. Three is the greatest number of wives which any man gets to possess, and each husband has the right of selling his wives to another, but this resale makes the woman of little worth, and for that reason she is sold very cheaply; poor men only buy women in this way since they lack the funds to buy them first-hand. It is not considered improper to sell a woman to a relative, unless it be to the woman's son or brother, all other relatives being eligible as buyers. Many are the marriages of this type which are consumated because of the expense involved in procuring an unmarried woman. Single women, while they are yet young and have hopes of being married keep their virginity, but should these hopes vanish, they will have sex relations promiscuously. Those married women who find that the husband who bought them from their father or guardian is to their liking, are faithful, but should they not like their husbands they become troublesome -- yet adultery is not considered a crime unless committed in the husband's presence, and in such a case the adulterer and not the woman is blamed, and even then no punishment is meted out, the husband being easily mollified. The chief always has as a wife the daughter or sister of some other chief, and she is the head wife amongst his others, who must serve her in every way. Even if the chief should tire of his principal wife he may not sell her because it would be considered an insult and cause for an outbreak of war with her relatives. All these head wives are grave in demeanor, given to few words, live secluded in their tents, spend their time in pursuits suitable [74] to their position, and do not take part in the vain conversations of the other Indian women. The men never manhandle the women for any reason, except when drunk, and even in such a condition the chief will never strike his head wife although all the others may well receive their share of blows.